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FRANCIS P. BLAIR, JR.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN ANSWER TO

A resolution of the House of the 28th ultimo, transmitting the information required.

MAY 2, 1864.—Referred to the Committee of Elections and ordered to be printed.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

April 29, 1864.

Mr. DAWES submitted, on the 28th instant, the following, which was this day adopted:

Resolved, That the President be requested to communicate to this house copies of all "letters, notes, telegrams, orders, entries, and other documents," which are referred to by him in his message sent to the House this day, and which have connexion with the answer made by him in that message to the resolution requesting him to inform the House whether Francis P. Blair, jr., of Missouri, holds now any appointment or commission in the military service of the United States.

Attest:

EDWARD McPHERSON, *Clerk.*

By CLINTON LLOYD, *Chief Clerk.*

To the honorable the House of Representatives :

In compliance with the request contained in your resolution of the 29th ultimo, a copy of which resolution is herewith returned, I have the honor to transmit the following:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION,
"Washington, November 2, 1863.

"MY DEAR SIR: Some days ago I understood you to say that your brother, General Frank Blair, desires to be guided by my wishes as to whether he will occupy his seat in Congress, or remain in the field. My wish, then, is compounded of what I believe will be best for the country and best for him, and

it is, that he will come here, put his military commission in my hands, take his seat, go into caucus with our friends, abide the nominations, help elect the nominees, and thus aid to organize a House of Representatives which will really support the government in the war. If the result shall be the election of himself as Speaker, let him serve in that position; if not, let him retake his commission and return to the army. For the country, this will heal a dangerous schism. For him, it will relieve from a dangerous position. By a misunderstanding, as I think, he is in danger of being permanently separated from those with whom only he can ever have a real sympathy—the sincere opponents of slavery. It will be a mistake if he shall allow the provocations offered him by insincere time-servers to drive him from the house of his own building. He is young yet. He has abundant talents—quite enough to occupy all his time without devoting any to temper. He is rising in military skill and usefulness. His recent appointment to the command of a corps, by one so competent to judge as General Sherman, proves this. In that line he can serve both the country and himself more profitably than he could as a member of Congress upon the floor. The foregoing is what I would say if Frank Blair were my brother instead of yours.

“Yours, truly,

“A. LINCOLN.

“Hon. MONTGOMERY BLAIR.”

“HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE DEPARTMENT, 8TH ARMY CORPS,
“Baltimore, Maryland, November 13, 1863.

“SIR: Enclosed I forward to the President my resignation, to take effect on the 5th of December.

“I respectfully request, however, that I may be relieved from my command at an earlier day, say by the 20th instant, or as soon thereafter as some officer can be ordered to succeed me. While I desire to derange the plans or hurry the action of the department as little as possible, it will be a great convenience to me to secure some little time before the session of Congress for a necessary journey, and for some preparations for myself and family in view of my approaching change of residence and occupation. I could also spend two or three days very profitably, I think, to the service of my successor after his arrival here.

“I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“ROBT. C. SCHENCK,

“Major General.

“Hon. E. M. STANTON,

“Secretary of War.”

“HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE DEPARTMENT, 8TH ARMY CORPS,
“Baltimore, Maryland, November 13, 1863.

“SIR: Having concluded to accept the place of member of Congress in the House of Representatives, to which I was elected in October, 1862, I hereby tender the resignation of my commission as a major general of United States volunteers, to take effect on the 5th day of December next.

“I shall leave the military service with much reluctance and a sacrifice of personal feelings and desires, and only consent to do so in the hope that in another

capacity I may be able to do some effective service in the cause of my country and government in this time of peculiar trial.

"I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"ROBT. C. SCHENCK,

"Major General.

"The PRESIDENT of the United States.

"ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, April 30, 1864.

"A true copy.

"S. F. CHALFIN,

"Assistant Adjutant General."

Indorsement on the foregoing letter:

"The resignation of General Schenck is accepted, and he is authorized to turn over his command to Brigadier General Lockwood at any time.

"EDWIN M. STANTON,

"Secretary of War.

"I certify that the above is a true copy of the original letter and indorsement

"E. D. TOWNSEND,

"Assistant Adjutant General."

"ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

"Washington, November 21, 1863.

"SIR: Your resignation has been accepted by the President of the United States, to take effect the 5th day of December, 1863.

"I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"E. D. TOWNSEND,

"Assistant Adjutant General.

"Major General ROBERT C. SCHENCK,

"U. S. Vol's, Com'dg Middle Department, Baltimore, Md."

"ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

"April 30, 1864.

"A true copy.

"S. F. CHALFIN,

"Assistant Adjutant General."

"WASHINGTON, January 1, 1864.

"I hereby tender my resignation as a major general of the United States volunteers.

"Respectfully,

"FRANK P. BLAIR,

"Major General United States Volunteers.

"The PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

"Washington City, D. C."

“JANUARY 12, 1864.

“Accepted by order of the President.

“EDWIN M. STANTON,
“Secretary of War.”

“ADJUTANT GENERAL’S OFFICE,
“May 1, 1864.

“A true copy.

“E. D. TOWNSEND,
“Assistant Adjutant General.”

“ADJUTANT GENERAL’S OFFICE,
“Washington, January 12, 1864.

“SIR: Your resignation has been accepted by the President of the United States, to take effect this day.

“I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
“JAS. A. HARDIE,
“Assistant Adjutant General.

“Major General FRANCIS P. BLAIR,
“U. S. Volunteers, care of Hon. M. Blair, Washington, D. C.”

“ADJUTANT GENERAL’S OFFICE,
“May 1, 1864.

“A true copy.

“E. D. TOWNSEND,
“Assistant Adjutant General.”

[Copy of telegram.]

“(Private.) “EXECUTIVE MANSION,
“Washington, D. C., March 15, 1864.

“General McPherson having been assigned to the command of a department, could not General Frank Blair, without difficulty or detriment to the service, be assigned to command the corps he commanded a while last autumn?

“A. LINCOLN.

“Lieutenant General GRANT,
“Nashville, Tennessee.”

[Copy of telegram.]

“UNITED STATES MILITARY TELEGRAPH.—WAR DEPARTMENT.

“In cipher.—Received 6 p. m. March 16, 1864.

“NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE,
“10 a. m., March 16, 1864.

“General Logan commands the corps referred to in your despatch. I will see General Sherman within a few days and consult him about the transfer, and answer.

“U. S. GRANT,
“Lieutenant General.

“His Excellency the PRESIDENT.”

"UNITED STATES MILITARY TELEGRAPH.—WAR DEPARTMENT.

"Received in cipher 11 p. m., 17th.

"(Confidential.)

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE,
"March 17, 1864.

"General Sherman is here. He consents to the transfer of General Logan to the seventeenth corps and the appointment of General F. P. Blair to the fifteenth corps.

" U. S. GRANT,
"Lieutenant General.

" His Excellency A. LINCOLN,
"President of the United States."

[Copy of telegram.]

"Received 3.15 a. m., March 27th.

" HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA,
" March 26, 1864.

"I understand by the papers that it is contemplated to make a change of commanders of the 15th and 17th army corps, so as to transfer me to the 17th. I hope this will not be done. I fully understand the organization of the 15th corps now, of which I have labored to complete the organization this winter, earnestly hope that the change may not be made.

" JOHN A. LOGAN,
" Major General.

" His Excellency A. LINCOLN,
"President of the United States."

[Copy of telegram.]

"OFFICE UNITED STATES MILITARY TELEGRAPH,
" War Department.

"The following telegram received at Washington 9 a. m., March 31, 1864, from Culpeper Court House, 11.30 p. m., dated March 30, 1864.

"General F. P. Blair will be assigned to the seventeenth (17th) corps, and not the fifteenth, (15th.) Assign General Joseph Hooker, subject to the approval of the President, to any other corps command you may have, and break up the animosity of one general commanding two (2) corps.

" U. S. GRANT,
" Lieutenant General, Commanding.

"Major General W. T. SHERMAN, Nashville."

From a long despatch of April 2, 1864, from General Sherman to General Grant, presenting his plan for disposing the forces under his command, the following extracts, (being the only parts pertinent to the subject now under consideration) are taken:

"After a full consultation with all my army commanders, I have settled down

to the following conclusions, to which I would like to have the President's consent before I make the orders."

“3d. General McPherson * * His corps to be commanded by
Major Generals Logan, Blair, and Dodge.” * * *

“OFFICE U. S. MILITARY TELEGRAPH,
“*War Department.*

"The following telegram received at Washington 3 p. m., April 10, 1864, from Culpeper Court House, Virginia, 10 p. m., dated April 9, 1864:

“Will you please ascertain if General F. P. Blair is to be sent to General Sherman; if not, an army corps commander will have to be named for the 15th corps.

"U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant General.*

“‘Major General H. W. HALLECK, *Chief of Staff*?’”

“WASHINGTON, April 20, 1864.

" You will do me a great favor by giving the order assigning me to the command of the 17th army corps immediately, as I desire to leave Washington the next Saturday to join the command. I also request the assignment of Captain Andrew J. Alexander, of 3d regiment U. S. cavalry, as adjutant general of the 17th corps, with the rank of lieutenant colonel. The present adjutant, or rather the former adjutant, Colonel Clark, has, I understand, been retained by General McPherson as adjutant general of the department, and the place of adjutant general of the corps is necessarily vacant.

"I also request the appointment of George A. Maguire, formerly captain, 31st Missouri volunteer infantry, as major and aide-de-camp, and Lieutenant Logan Tompkins, 21st Missouri volunteer infantry, as captain and aide-de-camp on my staff.

“Respectfully,

“FRANK P. BLAIR.

“The PRESIDENT.”

[Indorsements.]

“APRIL 21, 1864.

"Please have General Halleck make the proper order in this case.

"A. LINCOLN.

“Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.”

"Referred to General Halleck, Chief of Staff.

"EDWIN M. STANTON,
"Secretary of War."

"A true copy.

"E. D. TOWNSEND,
"Assistant Adjutant General."

“EXECUTIVE MANSION,
“Washington, April 23, 1864.

"**MY DEAR SIR:** According to our understanding with Major General Frank P. Blair, at the time he took his seat in Congress last winter, he now asks to withdraw his resignation as major general, then tendered, and be sent to the field.

Let this be done. Let the order sending him be such as shown me to-day by the Adjutant General, only dropping from it the names of Maguire and Tompkins.

“ Yours, truly,

“ A. LINCOLN.

“ Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.”

[Indorsement.]

“ APRIL 23, 1864.

“ Referred to the Adjutant General.

“ EDWIN M. STANTON,
“ *Secretary of War.*

“ ADJUTANT GENERAL’S OFFICE, May 1, 1864.

“ A true copy.

“ E. D. TOWNSEND,
“ *Assistant Adjutant General.*”

“ WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., April 23, 1864.

“ I respectfully request to withdraw my resignation as major general of the United States volunteers, tendered on the 12th day of January, 1864.

“ Respectfully,

“ FRANK P. BLAIR.

“ Hon. E. M. STANTON,

“ *Secretary of War.*”

“ ADJUTANT GENERAL’S OFFICE, May 1, 1864.

“ A true copy.

“ E. D. TOWNSEND,
“ *Assistant Adjutant General.*”

“ GENERAL ORDERS,

}

“ No. 178.

“ WAR DEPARTMENT,
“ ADJUTANT GENERAL’S OFFICE,
“ *Washington, April 23, 1864.*

“ I. Major General F. P. Blair, jr., is assigned to the command of the 17th army corps.

“ II. Captain Andrew J. Alexander, 3d regiment United States cavalry, is assigned as Assistant Adjutant General of the 17th army corps, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, under the 10th section of the act approved July 17, 1862.

“ By order of the President of the United States.

“ E. D. TOWNSEND,
“ *Assistant Adjutant General.*”

“ Official.

“ E. D. TOWNSEND,
“ *Assistant Adjutant General.*”

The foregoing constitutes all sought by the resolution, so far as is remembered, or has been found upon diligent search.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

MAY 2, 1864.

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